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Joint written statement* submitted by the Universal Peace Federation, a non-governmental organization in special status, and the Women's Federation for World Peace International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2018]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.

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Countering the World Drug Problem: Prioritizing Prevention through Strengthening Families

"The world spends much more energy and resources managing crises than preventing them. Thus the UN must uphold a strategic commitment to a "Culture of Prevention", pledged in 2005 but yet to materialize", explained newly elected UN Secretary General Antonia Guterres addressing the General Assembly. in critique of the body he was to head- and perhaps delineate his strategic priorities

We salute the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) especially the programs conducted in Latin America called "Strong Families" or "Strengthening Families". Looking more deeply into these programs it becomes evident that the preventative impact of strong families in relation to crime or drug abuse is very high and based on strong statistical evidence, yet the good news doesn't seem to travel far.

Strong families deliver the best protection against drugs and crime among young people. Quality relationships based on honesty, good communication skills, care for each other, accountability etc. between siblings and parents and children, can and should be taught and learnt so as to create a climate in families where destructive elements cannot easily invade young people. These qualities that so called "strong families" can naturally access and promote are a very effective deterrent for the debilitating influence of drugs and crime on, especially during their most vulnerable years of adolescence.

The positive effect of the programs of UNODC can be enhanced dramatically through parallel appropriate family-supporting measures provided by respective governments. UNODC has the necessary statistics and research allowing governments to learn how to support and adapt these programs to guarantee the best outcomes. A more pro-active policy of resources sharing and inter agency cooperation in this field could free desperately needed resources to areas like development and higher education.

It is however equally evident that if governments act carelessly in dealing with families or in extreme cases even counteract the positive approach of these programs, drug abuse and crime especially among youth will increase appreciably. Guiding and empowering parents to take on their primary responsibility towards their own children and should be the target of any efforts in crime and drug prevention measures. Governments should not only use repressive means, but show greater willingness to invest human and financial resources in support of positive preventative programs.

The Universal Peace Federation would like to offer the following recommendations:

1) The programs of UNODC should be adapted to other parts of the world, particularly also to nations of the Western hemisphere where drug abuse has dramatically increased due to governmental inabilities in many places, to combat family breakdown and or analyze the phenomenon of unattended and neglected youth properly. The preventative effects of "Strong Families" has not been widely understood, especially in the West.
2) Governments in all parts of the world should make the "Strong Families" Policy a **first priority** as to combat crime and drug abuse most effectively.
3) More research should be done worldwide in matters of "family education" as to guarantee that governments have the capacities and know-how to support the efforts of UNODC.